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#1 FREE DAILY NEWSPAPER IN CENTER CITY

FORECAST: ROYAL THUNDER {page 14}

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home

Decorators: Wallpaper is here to stay

It's never out of style, so don't pretend it was {page 29}

wellbeing

Don't just sit there! Really, stand up now!

Studies say you need to get off your butt {page 21}

Temple of the undergrads

Dorm completes Temple University's transition into bustling urban campus

Construction costs on ritzy residence breaks down to $138K per bed {page 02}

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

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In the news

2.2M

The amount netted in Monday night's Pennsylvania Lottery drawing of a jackpot-winning Match 6 Pennsylvania Lottery ticket sold at Mount Rose Beer and Soda in York. Eager bettors had been watching the jackpot grow since the last winning ticket was drawn on Nov. 26. The ticket holder has one year to claim the prize, and lottery officials can't confirm the winner's identity until that prize is claimed and validated. The retailer who sold the golden ticket will receive a $10,000 bonus, as well.

METRO

Local tweet

"Someone hung one of those car air fresheners inside the trolley. Might need more than one. #Septa."

@MNESTIC NOTICED THINGS WERE SMELLING A LITTLE FUNKY ON SEPTA YESTERDAY

In the news

Shake Shack thickens Philly presence

PHILADELPHIA. High off the success of their Rittenhouse Square opening last summer, owners of popular New York City-based burger chain Shake Shack yesterday announced they're cooking up two more area locations. "We received such a warm welcome when we opened in Center City," said CEO Randy Garutti. "It now feels like the right time to continue building our presence in Philly and the surrounding area."

A two-story University City Shake Shack with an outdoor patio will open this summer at 3200 Chestnut St. A standalone location near the King of Prussia Mall, which will be the company's second solar-powered restaurant, is slated to open in the fall. METRO

State rep. urges BSA to rethink ban on gays

State Rep. Brendan Boyle yesterday spoke out in favor of the Boy Scouts of America rethinking its ban on gay members.

"The decision to reverse the ban on gay members would mark a new era of tolerance and acceptance, and will likely spur growth among those who were once disenchanted with the Boy Scouts due to their ban on gay members," Boyle said.

METRO

New luxury dorms at Temple among most expensive in country

State-of-the-art, $216 million residence facility slated to open this fall ◆ Amenities galore for 1,275 students who get to live there

When 1,275 students move into Mitchell and Hilarie Morgan Residence Hall this fall, Temple University will complete the transition from sleepy commuter college to a bustling urban campus.

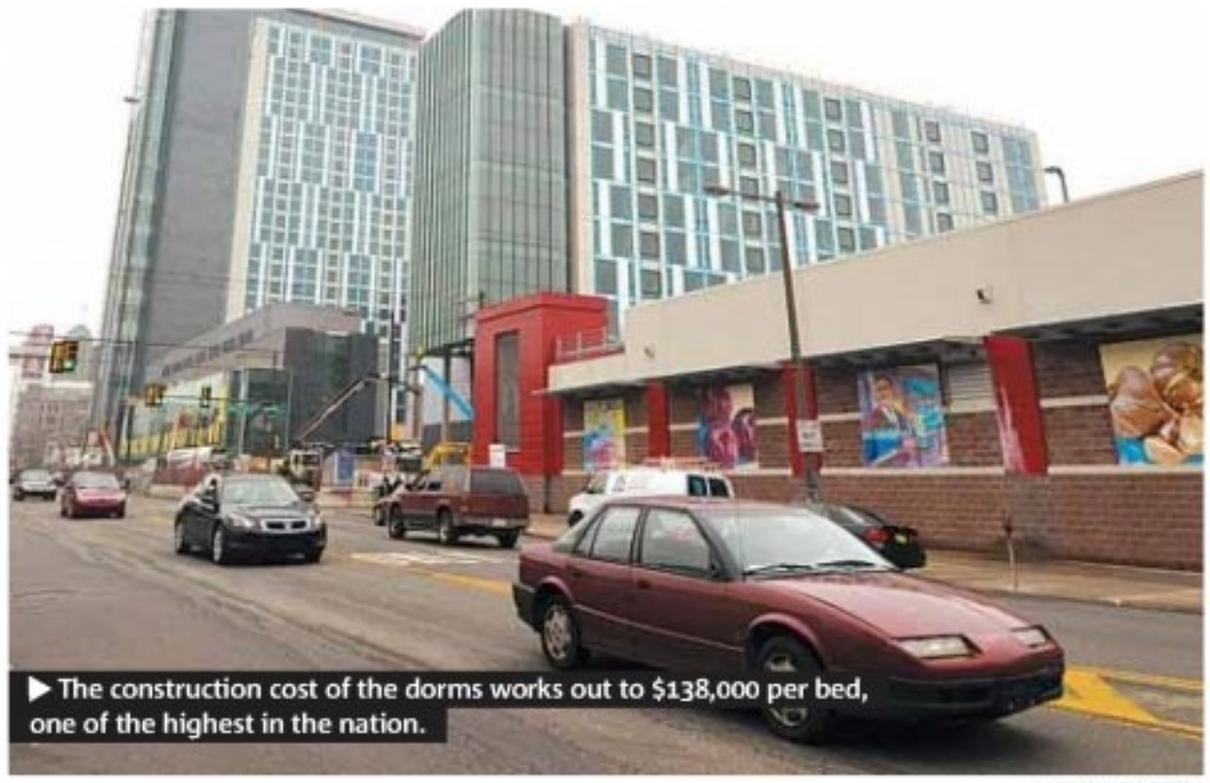
Touted as a "southern gateway" to the school's main campus, the $216 million state-of-the-art residential facility on North Broad Street boasts both high-rise and mid-rise towers, bi-level public dining facilities and a mini-park nestled between the two buildings.

"People who went to college in the '60s and '70s will not recognize these dorms," said Jim Creedon, Temple's vice president of construction, facilities, and operations.

He defended the $138,000-per-bed construction cost, one of the highest in the nation. "A great residential environment helps build a strong academic environment," he said. "The university is creating an atmosphere where the students will feel comfortable staying on campus and going to the computer lab or library at night."

The dorms are named for university trustee Mitchell Morgan, founder of real estate development and management company Morgan Properties, and his wife Hilarie. Morgan, who attended Temple in the 1970s, has been a longtime donor to the school and gave $5 million for the dorm construction alone.

"As a commuter student, I did not have much, if any, campus life," Morgan said. "It was for this reason ... that I thought [I would] help create more housing and continue to create a climate where campus life is a big part of the education process."



▶ The construction cost of the dorms works out to $138,000 per bed, one of the highest in the nation.

RICARD LARMA/METRO

Living in luxury

Amenities in the new dorms include:

- A 27-floor tower with four- and one-bed apartments, plus a sky-top event space
- A mid-rise building with four- and five-bed suites featuring two full bathrooms, state-of-the-art appliances and 42-inch flat-screen televisions
- Student lounges with 70-inch televisions, laundry facilities on every other floor and an on-site diner
- Keyless entry and wireless Internet
- A 700-seat, bi-level public dining facility with vendors like Starbucks, Tony Luke's, Cafe Spice and at least one retailer offering vegan and vegetarian meals

Quoted

"As a commuter student, I did not have much, if any, campus life."

MORGAN

Safety first

The complex will also have a Temple police station located inside. Creedon stressed the school's emphasis on security.

"We have made a large investment in safety," he said "Our Clery Act statistics are below that of similarly situated urban schools." The act requires colleges who receive federal financial aid to log and disclose campus crime and give students timely warnings about potential safety threats.

▶ If you lived here, you'd be home now.

RICARD LARMA/METRO

Quoted

"We have a well-trained campus police force and add extra patrols on the weekends. All students are informed how to keep safe."

CREEDON

Laura Goldman
letters@metro.us

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In the news

Watchdog urges action against councilwoman's campaign fund misuse

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

PHILADELPHIA. Political watchdog Committee of Seventy yesterday urged law enforcement to take a closer look at penalties imposed in the wake of a recently released Board of Ethics settlement in which City Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown admitted to misappropriating funds during her 2011 campaign.

"What's most troubling are revelations, agreed to by Reynolds Brown in the just-released settlement ... that contributions intended for her 2011 reelection were deposited into her personal bank account," CEO Zack Stalberg said.

Reynolds Brown also failed to list various sources of income and contributions and repaid a personal loan with campaign monies. She agreed to pay nearly $49,000 in fines and restitution.

The councilwoman acknowledged similar finance law breaches in a 2011 Board of Ethics settlement.

"Where, as in this case, an elected official violates the campaign finance law for the second time, you have to ask whether the earlier ... penalties were high enough to deter violations from happening again," Stalberg said. METRO/AW

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Battle over home's bloody background heads to state Supreme Court

ISTOCK

▶ Would you buy a home if you knew a violent crime took place there?

Janet Milliken was trying to escape tragedy when she moved from California to Delaware County in 2007 following the death of her husband. But her tribulations merely multiplied after she realized the home she purchased was the site of a murder-suicide — and she's now taking her case to the state Supreme Court.

"The issue [is] whether a psychological stigma — in this case, a murder-suicide — can be considered a material defect that needs to be disclosed in a residential real estate transaction," said Milliken's attorney Timothy Rayne.

A decision handed down last month by the state Superior Court found that, while buyers must be advised of a host of structural deficiencies and pest problems, violent crimes aren't included in that list.

"I think an average buyer would be more disturbed to learn that a ... murder-suicide had occurred in the master bedroom of the house than to learn that maybe the basement had a little bit of a leak or the roof leaked in the upstairs bathroom," said Rayne, who recently appealed the decision and said he has experts willing to testify that the event reduced the house's value by 10 to 15 percent.

For now, Milliken still lives in the home. She doesn't feel comfortable selling it without advising potential buyers of its bloody background.

$610K
The home she purchased for $610,000 was the site of a murder-suicide.

Alex Wigglesworth
awigglesworth@metro.us

Haunting history

Prior to the home's purchase by Kathleen and Joseph Jacono, who quickly flipped it to Milliken, it belonged to Konstantinos Koumboulis, 50, who fatally shot his wife Georgia in the master bedroom before turning the gun on himself in 2006.

According to court documents, the Jaconos and their agents with Re/Max Town and Country knew about the property's bleak background, but at least two state real estate organizations told them they weren't required to share the information with prospective buyers.

Re/Max counsel Abraham Reich said the issue doesn't come up frequently enough to warrant Supreme Court review. METRO/AW

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In the news

GETTY IMAGES

Transportation chief steps down

WASHINGTON. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood said yesterday he planned to resign, marking the latest departure from President Barack Obama's Cabinet.

"I have let President Obama know that I will not serve a second term as secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation," LaHood said in a statement.

LaHood, a Republican and former Illinois congressman, brought a bipartisan element to the Democratic president's team. LaHood said he would stay on until his successor is confirmed by the Senate.

Obama has been under pressure to bring more women and minorities into his Cabinet. **REUTERS**

Deal near for Twinkies maker

NEW YORK. Private equity firms Apollo Global Management LLC and C. Dean Metropoulos & Co. are near a deal to buy snack cake brands including Hostess Twinkies and Donettes, two sources familiar with the matter said yesterday.

The so-called stalking horse bid by the private equity firms would serve as the baseline offer for the business, which also includes Dolly Madison bread and Hostess cupcakes. It could still be topped by others at an auction. **REUTERS**

GETTY IMAGES

Obama urges Congress to make good on immigration system reform

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

President Obama shakes hands with supporters after delivering remarks on immigration reform yesterday.

President Barack Obama called on Congress yesterday to make good on plans to overhaul the U.S. immigration system and offer a path to citizenship for millions of illegal immigrants.

Reflecting the growing clout of Hispanic voters, Obama traveled to Nevada little more than a week after his second inauguration to make the case for swift bipartisan action on immigration.

"We need Congress to act on a comprehensive approach that finally deals with the 11 million undocumented immigrants," Obama said at a high school in Las Vegas.

After years on the back burner, immigration reform has suddenly looked possible as Republicans, chastened by Latino voters who rejected them in the November election, look more kindly on an immigration overhaul. **REUTERS**

Quoted

"We need Congress to act on a comprehensive approach that finally deals with the 11 million undocumented immigrants."

OBAMA SAID AT A HIGH SCHOOL IN LAS VEGAS

The president's reform challenge

Obama's challenge is to spur progress toward actual legislation guided by the senators' immigration plan without alienating his fiercest Republican opponents, who might oppose anything with the Democratic president's name on it.

Foreshadowing what could be a critical area of disagreement with Republicans, Obama stopped short of backing the Senate group's requirement that providing a path to citizenship be contingent on first doing more to secure the nation's borders.

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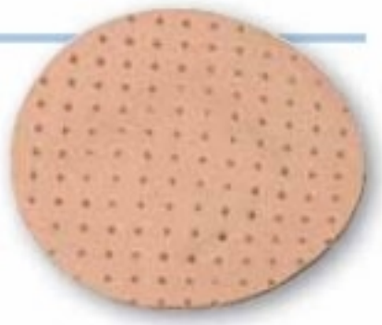

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In the news

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Kerry

Senate panel approves Kerry

WASHINGTON. Sen. John Kerry won the unanimous support of the chamber's Foreign Relations Committee yesterday to replace Hillary Clinton as President Barack Obama's new secretary of state.

The full Senate was expected to confirm Kerry later yesterday, setting in motion a special election for his Massachusetts Senate seat.

The senator and losing presidential candidate in 2004 has broad support from fellow Democrats as well as Republicans in the Senate. He is expected to be sworn in as the top diplomat later this week. **REUTERS**

Execution of woman in Texas postponed

AUSTIN, TEXAS. The execution of Kimberly McCarthy was postponed by a Texas judge yesterday, the day she was to die, to give her lawyers time to argue that racial discrimination played a role in choosing the jury that convicted her.

It was rescheduled for April 3, and, if carried out, McCarthy will be the first woman to be put to death in the United States in nearly three years.

Dallas County District Court Judge Larry Mitchell delayed the execution.

"Of the 12 jurors seated at trial, all were white, except one, and eligible non-white jurors were excluded from serving by the state," said Maurie Levin, a University of Texas adjunct law professor who assisted in representing McCarthy. **REUTERS**

Poll: Public supports female combat roles

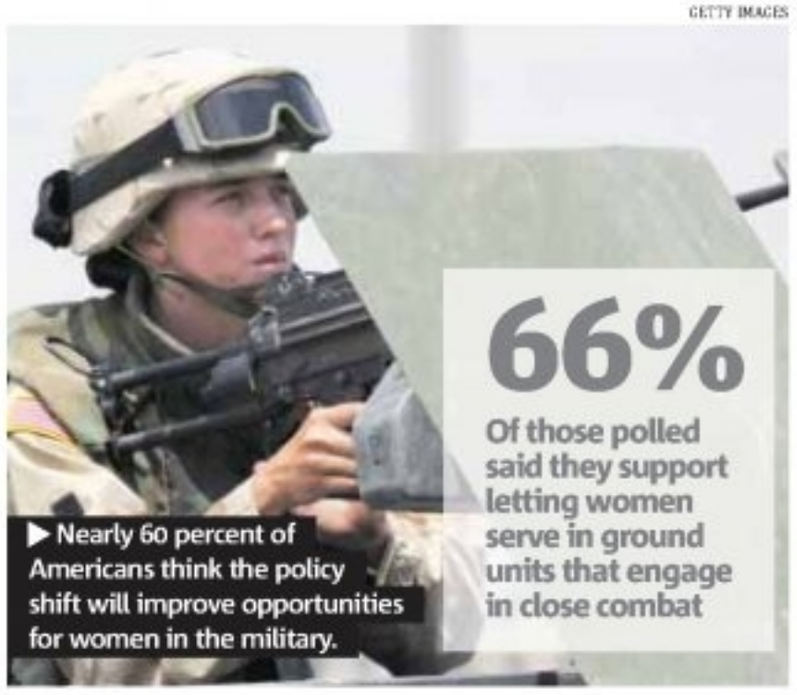
The U.S. public largely backs the Pentagon's decision to lift restrictions on women in combat, a poll showed yesterday.

Sixty-six percent of those polled said they support letting women serve in ground units that engage in close combat, while 26 percent are opposed, according to the survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and the Washington Post.

Opinion on the issue is little changed from a Washington Post/ABC News survey two years ago, Pew said in a statement.

The Defense Department lifted a longtime ban on women serving in frontline combat units on Thursday. The move marked a historic step toward sexual equality after 11 years of war in which women were increasingly on the battlefield.

GETTY IMAGES



▶ Nearly 60 percent of Americans think the policy shift will improve opportunities for women in the military.

66%

Of those polled said they support letting women serve in ground units that engage in close combat

The survey found that the public is split over whether the move represented a major change for the U.S. military. Forty-seven percent said it is, while an equal percentage said it is a minor change.

The poll found that 58 percent of Americans think that the policy shift will improve opportunities for women in the military.

Nearly half, or 49 percent, say allowing women to serve in combat roles will not make much difference to military effectiveness.

Among those who say it will have an impact, 29 percent say this will improve effectiveness, versus 15 percent who say it will make it worse. **REUTERS**

About the Pew poll

- The poll was conducted from January 24 to 27 among 1,005 adults, after Defense Secretary Leon Panetta ended the combat ban. The margin of error was 3.7 percentage points.
- The poll was conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and the Washington Post.

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Egypt unrest pushes state to brink: Army

MOHAMMED ABED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

▶ An Egyptian protester flashes the sign for victory as he stands on a burnt-out police vehicle in Cairo's Tahrir Square.

Egypt's army chief said political unrest was pushing the state to the brink of collapse — a stark warning from the institution that ran the country until last year as Cairo's first freely elected leader struggles to curb bloody street violence.

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, a U.S.-trained general appointed by President Mohamed Mursi last year to head the armed forces, added in a statement yesterday that one of the primary goals of deploying troops in cities on the Suez Canal was to protect the waterway that is vital for Egypt's economy and world trade.

Violence largely subsided yesterday, although some young people again hurled rocks at police lines in Cairo near Tahrir Square.

It seemed unlikely that Sisi was signaling the army wants to take back the power it held for six decades since the end of the colonial era and through an interim period after the overthrow of former air force chief Hosni Mubarak two years ago.

But it did send a powerful message that Egypt's biggest institution, with a huge economic as well as security role and a recipient of massive direct U.S. subsidies, is worried about the fate of the nation after five days of turmoil in major cities. REUTERS

52
The comments, published on an official army Facebook page, followed 52 deaths in the past week and highlighted the mounting sense of crisis facing Egypt and its head of state.

News in brief

At least 65 found executed in Syria

At least 65 people were found shot dead with their hands bound in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo yesterday in a "new massacre" in the near two-year revolt against President Bashar al-Assad, activists said.

Opposition campaigners blamed the government, but it was impossible to confirm who was responsible. Assad's forces and rebels have been battling in Syria's commercial hub since July and both have been accused of carrying out summary executions.

The U.N. refugee agency said yesterday the fighting had forced more than 700,000 people to flee. World powers fear the conflict could increasingly envelop Syria's neighbors including Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, further destabilizing an already explosive region. Opposition activists posted a video of a man filming at least 51 muddied male bodies alongside what they said was the Queiq River in Aleppo's rebel-held Bustan al-Qasr neighborhood. The bodies had bullet wounds in their heads and some of the victims appeared to be young, possibly teenagers, dressed in jeans, shirts and trainers.

Aleppo-based opposition activists blamed pro-Assad militia fighters. REUTERS

60K More than 60,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the Syrian war since it began two years ago.

"They were killed only because they are Muslims."
MAN VIDEOTAPED IN CENTRAL BUSTAN AL-QASR AFTER THE BODIES WERE REMOVED FROM THE RIVER

News in brief

Nightclub crackdown after Brazil tragedy

Cities across Brazil are beginning to crack down on nightclubs to ensure they comply with fire regulations following a weekend blaze that killed 231 people at a club in the southern university town of Santa Maria.

The fire was Brazil's deadliest in half a century and resonated across the country, with many people demanding those responsible be prosecuted. REUTERS

Other perils

Many fear similar fires can happen at:

- **World Cup** of soccer next year
- **Olympic Games** in 2016
- **Carnival** celebrations next month

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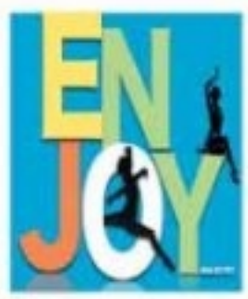

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THE WORD

Dorothy Robinson's take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

The feed ...

Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Today, Neil Patrick Harris is hoping for some change, Dita Von Teese is amused and Elle DeGeneres throws a pretty wild party.

@ActuallyNPH
Come on, Boy Scouts, do the right thing. Diversity should be honored and valued. There should be a merit badge for it.

@DitaVonTeese
"Sasquatch" is one of my favorite words, so the TV show "Finding Bigfoot"=big LOLs. Lines like "a squatchy area", "goin' squatchin'"...!

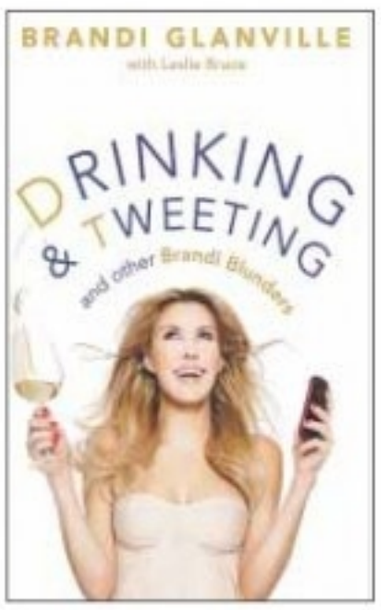
@TheEllenShow
I had a great birthday, and now the house is finally back in order. I just need to figure out how to get @JimmyKimmel out of my bathtub.

Dita Von Teese

Glanville's new book about getting new lady bits will probably become a best-seller. And then we can all just give up on life.

Brandi Glanville's best revenge? A new vagina (we're serious)

Holy cats, you guys. **Brandi Glanville** is insane! How do we know this? Let me present some excerpts from "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" star's new book, "Drinking & Tweeting and other Brandi Blunders," which were obtained by Life & Style:



Her reaction after finding out about Eddie Cibrian's affair with LeAnn Rimes: "I'm not entirely sure how I ended up on the floor of my closet sobbing ... Eddie found me lying there and without saying so much as a word, he started kissing me all over ... we started having sex," she recalls. "He swore up and down ... that it was completely innocent. In that moment, it was easier to believe him, because I just couldn't stand the thought of being without him."

How she got her revenge: "A brand-new vagina would be an Eddie-free vagina. ... I decided that since Eddie had ruined my vagina for me, he could pay for a new one. I gave [the doctor's office] Eddie's credit card number," she says about undergoing a vaginal rejuvenation for $12,000. Ack!

But, really, no hard feelings: "I would like to thank my ex-husband, Edward Cibrian, for giving me all the material I could ever need to write this book and for helping me discover the strong independent woman inside of me," she writes.

"I would like to thank my ex-husband, Edward Cibrian, for giving me all the material I could ever need to write this book and for helping me discover the strong independent woman inside of me." GLANVILLE

Talking points

Bradley Cooper will not be Lance Armstrong

Despite telling BBC News earlier this month that he'd be up for starring in a **J.J. Abrams**-produced biopic on disgraced cyclist **Lance Armstrong**, Oscar-nominee **Bradley Cooper** insists he's not interested. "Oh my God, that's so nuts," Cooper tells Access Hollywood, adding that he "had no idea what [the interviewer] was talking about" during the red carpet chat.

Beckham still needs to prove herself

Victoria Beckham is enjoying success in the fashion world, but she still feels like she has to prove herself. "I don't have to work, I need to work. All these [other fashion designers], they're not just been given anything. They've worked hard. And I've never been given anything either," she tells Elle UK. "You've got to trust people. And because I am a control freak, sometimes that's difficult for me."

GETTY IMAGES

Victoria Beckham

Tatum on becoming a dad

Channing Tatum is terrified of his impending parenthood, but in a good way. "I don't think there's one thing that doesn't terrify you, but in the most unbelievably beautiful way," the 32-year-old "Magic Mike" star tells E! News. "Someone said it's really like watching your heart jump out of your body and run around, and I think that can possibly be the coolest thing that I've heard of." As for how wife **Jenna Dewan-Tatum** is handling pregnancy? "I mean, women just sort of turn into, like, animals in this sort of stage that they're in," he says. "She's a complete animal right now. You can ask her, but in the most beautiful-like humanistic animal-y way. She's just a machine."

You can pick your friends, you can pick your nose ...

1 **Katy Perry** had some cheeky fun with her new Madame Tussauds Las Vegas statue on Saturday.

2 **Gemma Arterton** and **Jeremy Renner** promoted their No. 1 film, "Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters," in Australia on Tuesday.

3 When she's not cleaning houses on "Portlandia," **Aimee Mann** is still playing gigs. The singer performed in London on Monday.

4 What a chatterbox! **John Leguizamo** presented at the Garden of Laughs comedy show, to benefit the Garden of Dreams Foundation, at the Theater at Madison Square Garden on Saturday.

5 Winning smile! **Hillary Clinton** held an online town hall on Monday in Washington, D.C.

6 **Mary J. Blige** was smokin' at the premiere of Lifetime's "Betty & Coretta" on Monday in NYC.

1: JEROD HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES
2: LISA MARIE WILLIAMS/GETTY
3: C BRANDON/GETTY
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Still got the 'post-apocalyptic blues'

Screw the forecast, Royal Thunder is blowing into town ◗ Do they play doom metal? ◗ Blues rock? ◗ Doom blues? ◗ Atlanta group less about titles and more about bringing the heavy noise

CHRISTY PARRY

▶ The Royal Court: Coleman, Weaver, Parsonz and Smith

The devil went down to Georgia and apparently opened up a bitchin' record shop. How else to explain the consistently astounding pedigree of the Peach State's heavy music scene over the past decade? Sidling on up to the bar with their debut full-length "CVI," Atlanta four-piece Royal Thunder serve to remind that even in a land of seasoned heavyweights, the crown of critical adulation can be easily snatched by new blood with a bad attitude.

Led by lead banshee and bassist Mlny Parsonz, Royal Thunder deliver an electrifying and surprisingly accessible melange of heavy stylings, which Parsonz has been known to call "post-apocalyptic blues."

It's an apt description. At times spacey, dark, rampaging and sultry, Royal Thunder regularly confound expectations of a traditional metal band. Parsonz's scorching wails hold the center of the band, while the dual guitars of Josh Weaver (who is also married to Parsonz) and Josh Coleman tangle with Lee Smith's drums, invoking Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin with a bit more snarl. The recipe is right, and they have been covered by outlets ranging from the Village Voice to NPR.

Lest their metal cred be so besmirched, though, Royal Thunder are signed to Relapse Records, a seminal metal label. It's hard to find a more protective and insular scene than metal, but Parsonz doesn't shy away: "We've shared bills with bands like Behemoth. I don't really think the crowd cares if you come from a different direction, as long as you really lay into the set."

And, despite the somewhat recent spate of excellent female-fronted metal groups, Parsonz is no Janey-Come-Lately. A native New Jerseyian, she's been cutting her teeth as an "iron maiden" since middle school, where she copped her moves from the likes of Skid Row's Sebastian Bach.

"I danced when I was a kid," Parsonz confides, "but I would turn red when people would watch me."

Now she turns red for a different reason: from screaming.

Plus, she seems to like playing hard rock much better than dancing.

"With music," she says, "I could put something between me and them."

Silent shout

Parsonz explains how she preserves her screaming voice while touring: "I usually don't talk all day before a show. Sometimes there's nothing in there until I hit the stage, but at that point, I can let the adrenaline sing for me."

▶ Royal Thunder with Enslaved, Pallbearer, Ancient VVisdom, A Life Once Lost and Sunburster
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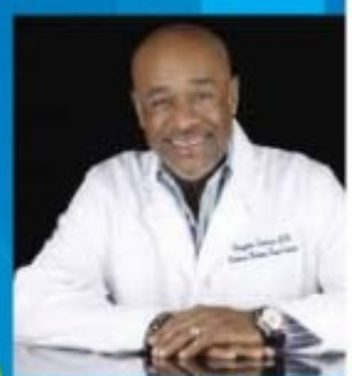

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myentertainment

In the name of sequin-covered dresses

New exhibit at the African American Museum in Philadelphia explores why the Supremes are considered 'icons of aspiration' The history of the trio is documented through their gowns

The centerpiece of "Come See About Me," the African American Museum in Philadelphia's new exhibit relating the story of Mary Wilson and the Supremes, is undoubtedly the gowns — more than 30 colorful, glamorous outfits worn by the iconic Motown trio during their illustrious career. That may seem a bit frivolous for an institution dedicated to black history, but Wilson herself points out how that story is embodied in these sequin-covered dresses.

"It's about the history of when we wore those gowns," Wilson said at a preview of the exhibit.

The show begins by placing the group's rise to fame in context, with images of segregation and black cultural icons of the early 1960s. It continues to trace the Supremes' rise to fame, from magazine articles to album covers. Video footage of their TV appearances show Wilson in action alongside Diana Ross and Florence Ballard. And through it all, Wilson said, "Those gowns have seen everything."

"Those gowns have seen everything," Wilson says.

BYAN J. DENNIS/SKAI BLUE MEDIA

Quoted **"They represent three little black girls who dared to dream at a time when it was an impossible dream. People ask if we thought about becoming stars, but we were just trying to become citizens."** MARY WILSON

If you go

Come See About Me: The Mary Wilson Supremes Collection
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TV watch list

'Super Bowl's Greatest Commercials 2013'

SPECIAL. Don't forward through this special — those multimillion-dollar commercials of Super Bowls past are the featured content. **8 p.m., CBS**

'Top Chef: Seattle'

REALITY. The chefs set sail to Alaska, where cruise ship-themed challenges — creating an amuse bouche from iceberg lettuce; putting a new spin on surf and turf — might make some seasick. **10 p.m., Bravo**

'The Americans'

DRAMA. Russian-born KGB agents (Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys) are on a mission to infiltrate and destroy the U.S. government in the early 1980s, all while under the cover of an average suburban couple raising kids on the outskirts of D.C. Their double lives are complicated when an FBI agent (Noah Emmerich) moves across the street in tonight's premiere. **Series premiere, 10 p.m., FX**

AMBER RAY

Merchant of laughs

One of the brilliant minds behind the original 'Office' talks about co-starring with Halle Berry in the lascivious new Farrelly Brothers comedy 'Movie 43'

Stephen Merchant has built quite the career behind the camera, writing and directing alongside creative partner Ricky Gervais for series like "The Office," "Extras" and "Life's Too Short," but he always relishes a chance to get in front of the camera. Luckily, director Peter Farrelly, who cast Merchant in 2011's "Hall Pass," had him in mind for a segment in his raunchy comedy "Movie 43."

RELATIVITY MEDIA

▶ What a man will do for love: Halle Berry and Stephen Merchant star in "Movie 43."

I gather it didn't take much convincing to get you to work with Peter again?
Yeah, basically Peter said, "Do you want to be in a sketch where you're on a blind date with Halle Berry?" I think I probably said yes before he'd finished the word "Berry." That might have been the best offer I've ever had.

How much of the craziness that you get up to in this are you allowed to talk about?
Do you know, I don't know what I'm allowed to talk about. Basically, it's Halle and I on a blind date, and she introduces the idea of Truth or Dare, so our dares start quite modestly and kind of escalate in absurdity and comic grotesqueness.

It's odd to think of either of you needing to go on a blind date.
I do actually say to her in the sketch, "I'm surprised that she's on a blind date." I think people can accept that I'm on a blind date. I agree that it's mad that she is, but there you are.

You've pretty successfully made the jump from writing to acting, starting with "Extras." Was that always part of the plan?
It was always my plan. I mean, I always felt like I was a performer. It was never an intention not to perform. When we did "The Office," neither of us were experienced performers, and it seemed kind of foolhardy for us both to try and be in front of the camera and also writing it and also directing it. But I think Ricky and I always knew that I was a performer and it was sort of in our armory, and so when I was in "Extras," people were quite surprised, like this was a novelty. I just don't think people tend to think of me as an actor, so I don't tend to get offered much acting stuff.

Is there anything you've been doing to change that perception?
Well, not really, but I'm doing this sitcom for HBO [called "Hello Ladies"], which is me as a would-be ladies' man in Los Angeles failing to seduce women and failing to be part of the beautiful world, and I'm doing that later in the year.

Q&A

Peter tells me he predicts "Movie 43" will get a 6 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

I mean, it'd be lucky if it gets a 6, I'd have thought. I'm constantly amazed by the disparity between critical appreciation of things and audiences. I have no idea anymore what an audience will respond to and what a critic will respond to. I'll go see a movie that's been critically applauded and I'll hate it, or you know, I'll go see something which they loathed and which kills me. So I no longer have any idea what either the critics or an audience wants to see.

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Predict your video's potential to go viral

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Psy's "Gangnam Style" video has more than 1 billion hits on YouTube.

Viral videos are famously impossible to predict. Who, for instance, could have foreseen the phenomenal success of Rebecca Black's "Friday" or Psy's "Gangnam Style"?

Yet, Unruly, a UK firm that specializes in collecting data around viral videos, claims it has a tool that can help advertisers predict the amount of earned media their videos are likely to attract across social media and how much advertisers should spend promoting their videos. Dubbed Unruly Share Rank, the algorithmic tool will help advertisers "gain insight into the psychological, social and content triggers that affect the success of their video content," according to the company, which also promises "they'll know the word-of-mouth potential of their video before they spend anything on media."

The company didn't disclose exactly how Share Rank works, except that it's based on seven years' worth of data from the Unruly Viral Video Chart and the algorithm includes more than 10,000 data points. (Disclosure: Mashable is a partner for Unruly's Global Ads Chart.) Such data is combined with the emotional reactions of test subjects and on their stated willingness to share the video. Pricing for Share Rank was not disclosed.

TODD WASSERMAN FOR Mashable The Social Media Guide

In the news

YouTube to launch paid subscriptions

YouTube is planning to launch paid subscriptions for a couple dozen channels as soon as April, according to a new report in AdAge citing "multiple people familiar with the plans."

The online video site has reportedly reached out to a "small group" of channels asking them to apply to be among the first paid channels. There is also talk that YouTube might charge for live events like concerts and libraries of older episodes.

AdAge reports that the initial subscription costs would be between $1 and $5 per month. These channels also would have the option to show ads.

SETH FIEGERMAN FOR Mashable The Social Media Guide

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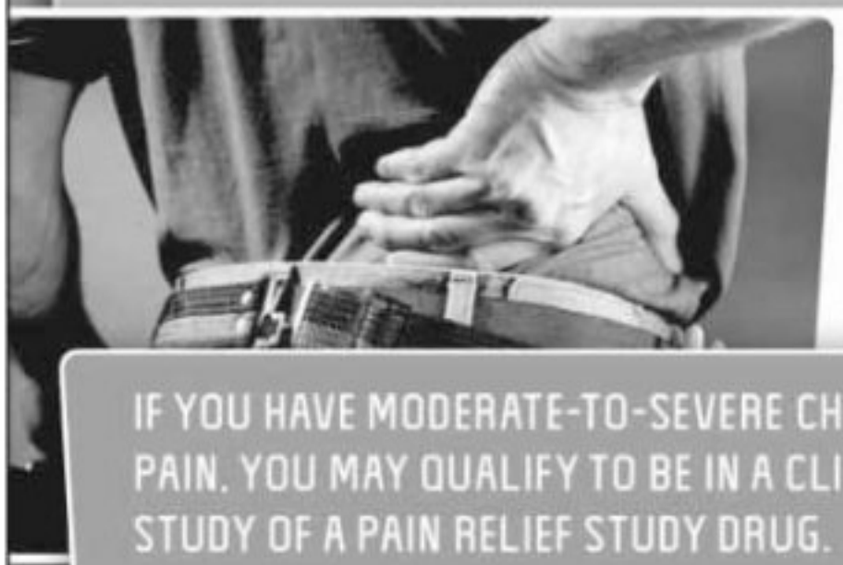

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Lingerie essentials

"Girls" costume designer Jenn Rogien nails it when it comes to what hip, real ladies want to wear. She especially knows undies since, let's face it, Lena Dunham's character finds a way to strip down in each episode. Now Rogien is taking her knowledge of underpinning for the Williamsburg set to Aerie, American Eagle's sister line of lingerie, where she will serve as style and fit expert.

Here, she explains the essentials for building an intimates wardrobe.

Tina Chadha

tina.chadha@metro.us

Rogien's picks:

What you should have in your lingerie drawer

- A foundation bra that supports and disappears under clothes. This bra is smooth, fits well and is a neutral color that doesn't show lines, bumps or color under clothes. A T-shirt bra is a great option.
- A fun bra that makes you feel pretty
- An athletic bra that fits and supports
- A shaper that smoothes and shapes under fitted looks and dresses
- An assortment of undies that don't leave you with VPL (visible panty lines) — ever. This could include a thong, a seamless bikini or a laser-cut hipster brief. Anything that fits you well that doesn't grab or dig.

Tips for lingerie shopping

- Make sure you're wearing the right size! If you don't know or haven't had a bra fitting in a while, go in for a bra fitting.
- Don't be afraid to go a size up. No one likes to go up, but often the fit is better and the overall look is more flattering with a bit of ease.
- Just because intimates are basics doesn't mean they have to be basic. Have fun! Express your personality. Let the undies help tell your story.

Rogien

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Today in medicine

Timing of food intake and weight regulation

Study subjects: 420 overweight adults
Location of study: U.S./Spain
Results: A study published in the International Journal of Obesity found late eaters (those who eat lunch after 3 p.m.) had a slower weight-loss rate and lost significantly less weight than early eaters (who eat before 3 p.m.).
Significance: Timing your meals around the clock could further aid your weight-loss efforts.

When not to go to the ER

Study subjects: Various data
Location of study: Scotland
Results: New research published online in the Emergency Medicine Journal found that patients admitted to acute medical units on public holidays and weekends are significantly more likely to die than those admitted on other days of the week. While some figures put weekend mortality at a potential 10 percent higher, researchers concluded that patients admitted as medical emergencies on public holidays increased their risk of mortality within seven days by 48 percent and were 27 percent more likely to die within 30 days.
Significance: Because differences in senior doctor staffing in AMUs remained the same on holidays, weekdays and weekends, supervision is unlikely to be the explanation, and further research is needed.

STOCKBYTE

▶ Hey, migraine sufferers: The weather might be to blame.

The age to quit smoking by

Study subjects: 200,000 Americans
Location of study: Canada
Results: A study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine found that people who quit smoking by middle age don't die much earlier than people who have never smoked. On average, quitting before age 44 lessened life expectancy by just one year, and quitting by age 54 nixed four years.
Significance: The figures reveal the remarkable powers of healing and regeneration that the lungs possess before diseases such as cancer set in. But don't take this as encouragement to smoke: "Former smokers still have a greater risk of dying sooner than people who never smoked," study author Dr. Prabhat Jha of the University of Toronto says.

Lightning and headaches

Study subjects: Participants with migraines
Location of study: U.S.
Results: A report published in the journal Cephalalgia found that when lightning struck within 25 miles of a chronic headache sufferer's home, the person was 31 percent more likely to get a headache and 28 percent more likely to get a migraine. The researchers also found that new-onset cases of headaches and migraines increased by about a quarter.
Significance: Weather elements such as barometric pressure and humidity are suspected as culprits.

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Test your diet IQ!

1 Which of these three foods is the highest in calories?
- a. 1 tablespoon olive oil
- b. 1 tablespoon butter
- c. 1 tablespoon margarine

Answer: A – Olive oil has 120 calories per tablespoon while butter and margarine clock in at 100 calories per tablespoon. However, olive oil is still the best choice because it's a heart-healthy fat. Just be sure to use it sparingly if you're watching your weight.

2 How much walking would it take to burn off the calories in a bagel with cream cheese?
- a. 45 minutes
- b. 1 hour, 10 minutes
- c. 1 hour, 50 minutes

Answer: C – To burn the 550 calories in a typical bagel with cream cheese, a 150-pound woman would have to walk at 3 miles per hour for an hour and 50 minutes! Scoop out the bagel or use a 100 percent whole wheat English muffin instead. And opt for a thin spread of cream cheese or, better yet, heart-healthy peanut butter.

3 At a restaurant, which of these changes will trim the most calories from your meal?
- a. Skipping a glass of wine
- b. Passing on a piece of bread or small roll from the bread basket
- c. Asking for salad dressing on the side and only using 1-2 tablespoons

Answer: C – Skipping the glass of wine or bread will save you about 120 calories, but you'll slash far more by trimming the dressing. Most restaurants add at least 4 tablespoons of dressing to a standard side salad. With each tablespoon clocking in around 90 calories, you can save 200-300 calories by ordering it on the side and using only 1-2 tablespoons.

PHOTODISC

4 Which of these cuts of meat is the highest in calories?
- a. Prime rib
- b. Filet mignon
- c. Strip steak

Answer: A – A typical restaurant portion of prime rib has close to 1,000 calories. An equal portion of the strip steak will be about 600 calories and the filet mignon clocks in around 500 calories.

5 True or false: Brown rice has fewer calories than white rice.

Answer: FALSE – A cup of brown rice has the same amount of calories as a cup of white rice. Brown rice is a whole grain, so it's the nutrition and fiber winner — but, from a purely calorie-saving perspective, there's no weight loss advantage to choosing brown over white. Watch your portions with either — 1 cup is about 210 calories.

6 True or false: Skim milk has more sugar than whole milk.

Answer: FALSE — Both skim and whole milk have 12 grams of naturally occurring sugar (lactose) per cup. The only difference between the two is the fat content (and therefore the calories). One cup of whole milk clocks in at 150 calories and skim milk provides 80 calories.

— For more tips, visit Joybauer.com and follow Joy on Facebook and Twitter (@joybauer).

▶ Ordering your salad with dressing on the side — and only using a tiny bit! — will save you big.

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She won't be smiling when she starts developing back problems.

BANANASTOCK

GET UP, STAND UP

You may have heard lately that 'sitting is the new smoking' – and we couldn't agree more

Some easy ways to stay active

You might want to stand up for this: We're on our butts more than ever during the day, and it's hurting our health. "We recently conducted a study showing that the life expectancy of U.S. adults could increase by two years if all adults reduced their sitting time to less than three hours a day," says I-Min Lee, a Harvard researcher.

And it gets worse: In October, The New York Times published research from the journal Diabetologia, which looked at 18 studies involving nearly 800,000 people. The authors found that the average adult spent 50 to 70 percent of his or her time sitting, and that those who sat the most had "a 112 percent increase in their relative risk of developing diabetes, a 147 percent increase in their risk for cardiovascular disease and a 49 percent greater risk of dying prematurely — even if they regularly exercised."

We asked some experts for their most practical tips on moving more throughout the day.

Advice

Margo Donohue, boot camp instructor, **Brooklynfitchick.com**

▶ **Get a standing desk:** If it's too impractical to use at work, set one up at home. "I haven't looked back, and that was about two years ago," she says.

This turns your work space into a no-sit zone. Work EZ FitDesk, $125, www.uncagedergonomics.com

Rob Sulavar, writer, trainer, sports nutritionist and founder of **www.bandanatraining.com**

▶ **Make your meetings walk-and-talks.** "It gets the creative juices flowing."

Joey Gonzalez, chief operating officer and trainer at Barry's Bootcamp, **www.barrysbootcamp.com**

▶ **If you have an office:** "Find a spot against the wall and get into a wall sit. Legs should be bent 90 degrees. Try and increase the amount of time as your legs get stronger."

Laura Miranda, physical therapist and trainer, **www.stronghealthywoman.com**

▶ **Drink up.** "Keep a bottle of water on your desk. Drink enough so you have to go to the bathroom one or two times an hour."

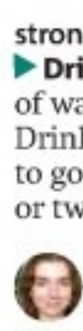
Mini-workout

▶ **"Lift feet off the ground and contract lower abdominals.** Try and increase the amount of time as your abs get stronger." – Gonzalez

▶ **"Place a Pilates ball between your knees and squeeze and pulse.** Do 20 reps and rest then repeat. This is great for the inner thigh and lower abdominals." – Simone De La Rue, celebrity trainer, bodybysimonetv.com

▶ **"Leave a golf ball under your desk and slip your shoes off during the day to roll out your feet."** – Sulavar

▶ **"Straighten your legs on occasion to prevent tightening of the calves and hamstrings.** Flexing each foot while sitting helps, too. Stretching in your chair will also keep your body from locking up. A little bit goes a long way." – Dr. Florence Comite, Comitemd.com



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It's a yogurt craze!

We're (happily) overwhelmed by all these new Greek products

For the kiddies

Yoplait Pro Force Greek Yogurt for Tweens:

Here's a tween product we're totally stealing. These new Greek yogurts for young'uns contain no artificial colors, flavors or sweeteners and provide a serious calcium kick.

$3, grocery stores

For on-the-go snacking

Chobani's new products:

One of our favorite yogurt makers is introducing two new flavors this year, pear and banana, which are a good swap when you can't mix in your own fruit into plain yogurt. Also be on the lookout for Chobani Flips — Greek yogurt paired with mix-ins ($1.39 per cup). We're especially partial to flavors like Strawberry Sunrise (strawberry yogurt with honey oats) and Honey Bee-Nana (honey yogurt with banana).

METRO/ME

Chobani Pear, $1.29, grocery stores

For a creamy dessert

Yasso Frozen Greek Yogurt Bars:

Yasso is the first brand to release frozen Greek yogurt bars, and now it's introducing a new and improved line, in flavors like Blueberry, Mango and Coconut. Despite a few tiny tweaks, the stats still impress us: These bars are high in protein, low in cals and made with hormone-free milk and natural sweeteners. Who says you can't enjoy popsicles in the middle of winter?

$5, grocery stores

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Horoscope

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** Guard against an inclination to do things the hard way, especially where your work is concerned. If you're using an ineffective procedure, try something different.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Even if your hunches are usually correct, if they are more negative than positive you should dump them as quickly as you can. Be careful — your imagination may be playing tricks on you.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** It's time to phase out something that isn't living up to its potential in terms of profits. The longer you stay with it, the more money it will end up costing you.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** When pursuing an objective, take care not to walk over others. It might end up costing you far more than just time and money.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Don't make the mistake of thinking that aggressiveness is the same as vision. Before imposing any of your ideas on your co-workers, make sure they're feasible.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** Watch out for any little changes that may have been made to something without your or anybody else's knowledge. They could alter matters greatly.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** It isn't likely that you'll be proud of your efforts if you're more interested in getting things done than you are in getting them done right. Quality over quantity should be your mantra today.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Although you will be a keen observer, unfortunately your focus is likely to be more on others' failings than on their many positive qualities.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** It would be a huge mistake on your part to spend funds you have earmarked for something essential. If you're not disciplined in the handling of money, you'll never get ahead.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** Remember the adage: "If it isn't broke, don't try to fix it," and your life will be much easier. Don't needlessly ask for trouble.

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** You're not likely to look good in the eyes of others if you try to shirk or displace blame. Instead, spend your energy making corrections, not accusations.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Unless you pay close attention to what you're spending, you won't be a good manager of your money. Don't shell out what you can't afford to lose.

BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Solution to yesterday's crossword

C	H	E	F	■	S	A	L	U	D	■	A	J	A	R
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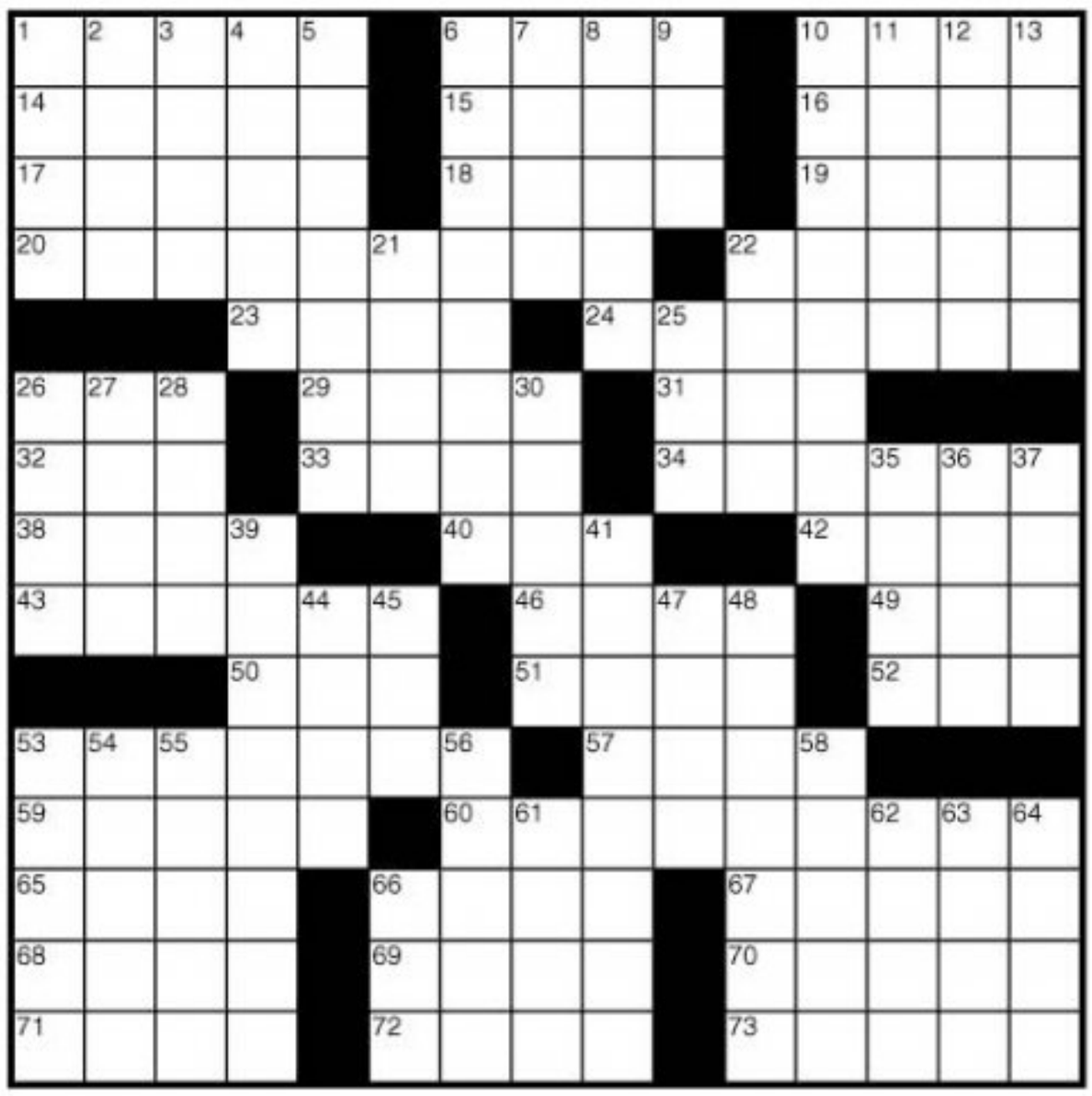

Across
1 Fossil rock
6 Aspiration
10 Prevail upon
14 "— Elena"
15 Cousteau's islands
16 Motel sign
17 Fuel tanker
18 Billion, in combos
19 Muck or slime
20 February celeb
22 Blush makeup
23 Greenish-blue
24 Pined
26 Brooks or Gibson
29 Bed support
31 "My, my!"
32 Sapporo sash
33 Pitchfork part
34 Tarzan's moniker
38 Search high and low
40 Beads on grass
42 Extinct bird
43 Massages
46 Marina sight
49 Terhune's collie
50 Lawyer's thing
51 In — (as found)
52 911 responder
53 Flocks of geese
57 Scads
59 Marsh stalker
60 Gym machine
65 Heavy burden
66 Cattle mover
67 "Walk Away —"
68 Half, in combos
69 Nobel-winning bishop
70 Bauxite giant
71 NFL broadcaster
72 Type of ladder
73 Hot dog vendor

Down
1 Hazardous haze
2 "Aquarius" musical
3 Woody's son
4 Capt.'s inferior
5 Heartfelt
6 — fling
7 Mishmash
8 "Fever" singer — Lee
9 NASA counterpart
10 Opened the wine
11 Familiar episode
12 Overcharge
13 Done with
21 Surrealist painter
22 Rough file
25 LAX info
26 — turtle soup
27 Poet's black
28 Cement component
30 Is rife with
35 Tunnel maker
36 Economist — Smith
37 Nonverbal OKs
39 Intrudes (2 wds.)
41 Saw the kid home (2 wds.)
44 Shoulder muscle, briefly
45 Compass pt.
47 Portico
48 Frozen plains
53 Hollow rock
54 De Mille or Moorehead
55 Cranky person
56 Majorette's gait
58 Refine, as metal
61 Learning method
62 Pizarro foe
63 Novelist — Uris
64 Clue
66 Qt. components

Letters

BSA allowing gays: Change of heart or publicity stunt?

Being a gay Eagle Scout, I was removed from the organization after 16 years of service and learning. The way that the BSA is handling this situation is being done too publicly. If they were making the change as the right thing do, this would have been a swift and quiet change. Instead, it's a push to either regain their lost corporate sponsors or find sponsors that will reaffirm or support their beliefs. For a long time, BSA was a large part of my life — but in order for me to believe in the change, there has to be affirmative action with their changes, not just shifting the blame. I'm a believer in the program and hope one day they can regain their focus and stand up for what's right.

RODERICK KOHL, VIA E-MAIL

Fewer fightin', more helpful words

RE: "GIVE ME LIBERTY, NOT MORE GOVERNMENT"

(METRO, JAN. 29) To be sure, letter writer John Bevan clearly does not understand the Second Amendment. It was not the intention of the founders that the people were to be armed as a matter to protect themselves from a tyrannical government, it was most assuredly the people were to be armed in order to call up an army quickly in times of invasion or insurrection from within since at that time there was no standing army. Mr. Bevan's paranoid "out of my cold dead hands" sounds more like he is trying to start something than to explain his second amendment rights.

WILLIAM H. HOUSE, VIA E-MAIL

In response to John Bevan's call for more guns in our communities, I give you the words from the 1934 Congressional testimony of NRA Chief Executive Officer Karl T Frederick: "I do not believe in the general promiscuous toting of guns. I think it should be sharply restricted and only under licenses." Given Mr. Frederick had seen the lawlessness and senseless violence of Prohibition up close, we would do well to heed his words lest history be repeated.

JOSEPH CONNELL, VIA E-MAIL

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3

Birds of a feather? Hawes, Young share eccentric gene

ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

▶ Hawes tried the mullet look earlier this season but found it was too hard to maintain.

Outlandish Sixers duo feeding off each other ◗ Pair brings unique fashion, hairstyles to the court ◗ But offer words of wisdom for Bynum

Spencer Hawes' blue arm-sleeve was draped across Nick Young's chair. The two have shared lockers next to each other for the entire season, but last Saturday was the first time they both took center court together in the starting lineup.

The pair combined for 21 points in Monday's 103-100 loss to Memphis. Two nights prior, Young put in 20 points alone.

"We've developed a great rapport coming off the bench together," said Hawes. "Coach [Doug Collins] told me before the season that Nick was someone I needed to get comfortable playing with because we'd be spending a lot of time together in that bench mob. Now that we're starting together, I think we have a lot better of a feel of how to play with one another."

Hawes and Young have two of the team's most outlandish personalities. Hawes was sporting a mullet to start the year. Last week, he decided to take a spin around the court in a Segway. Young recently trimmed his Afro-spiked locks for a new look that teammate Royal Ivey has termed the "Sonic the Hedgehog." Last month, Young wore leopard-skin shoes into the locker room.

▶ Young, before his recent haircut

"Pretty much everything [Young] wears, how he looks and what he says is all comedy to me," said Hawes. "My mullet was a lot better than his little 'fro or whatever he has going on right now, but it became just too much for me to keep up with."

Where Hawes embraces Young's eccentricities, he doesn't feel the same way about everyone.

"I don't know what the hell [Andrew Bynum is] thinking," Hawes said about Bynum's hairdo. "He's about five years behind the cornrows, plus he's also a little too big for the cornrows. I liked his 'fro a lot better."

Jeff McMenamin
sports@metro.us

Hair spray

Getting to know your Sixers' grooming habits:

- **Bynum's flattened Afro:** When your haircut gets you a two-minute segment on TMZ, you know you made it.
- **Young, aka "Swaggy P," introduced the "Sonic the Hedgehog"** last week and has had his best three-game stretch of the season.
- **Hawes' mullet:** He rocked the mullet to start the season and looked like a 1980s rocker.

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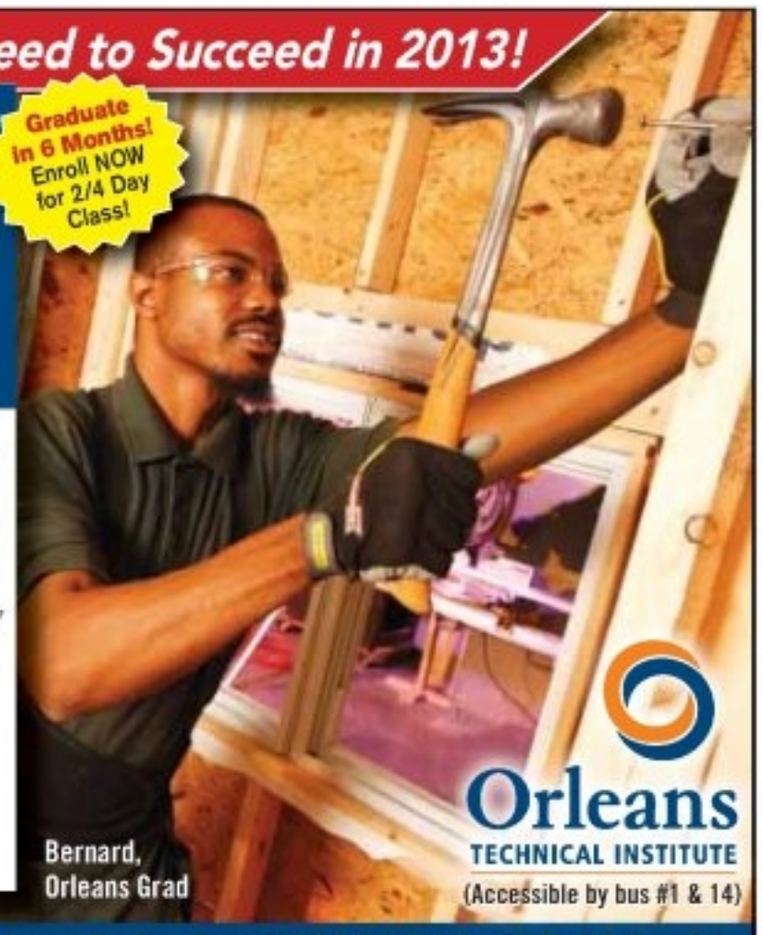

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Metro's NBA power rankings | by Jimmy Toscano

1 THUNDER

ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

THUNDER (34-11)
The Thunder have lost three of their last five games, allowing 100-plus points in each. They can afford to give up more points due to their offense, but it's not a good habit to get into. Still, this is the best team in the league.

SPURS (36-11)
Winners of eight straight, the Spurs should win their next four, too. They've played cupcakes lately, but the Spurs are knocking on OKC's door.

CLIPPERS (33-13)
The Clippers just snapped a four-game losing streak, and get this: It's their fourth losing streak this year. This streaky trend is something to watch.

HEAT (28-13)
The defending champion Heat just visited the White House on Monday. If they lose to teams without their best player, like the Celtics on Sunday, they won't be back there.

GRIZZLIES (29-15)
They blew out the Lakers and Nets at home and then lost by 12 to the Hornets on Sunday. Nothing more than a trap game loss? Perhaps.

NUGGETS (28-18)
The Nuggets are in the midst of a six-game homestand. There aren't many harder places to play than in Denver. This team will be tough in the playoffs.

WARRIORS (27-17)
Last week started out great, with wins over the Clippers and Thunder. But it ended poorly with losses to the Bulls and Bucks.

NETS (27-18)
Perhaps no team was screwed more when it came to All-Star selections. Brook Lopez isn't an All-Star this year? The Mayans were ... wait, no they weren't.

BULLS (27-17)
The Bulls keep doing their thing, and no one seems to notice or want to notice. Joakim Noah and Luol Deng have done a tremendous job.

KNICKS (27-15)
The Knicks continue their up-and-down play. They beat the Celtics and Hawks, but a 17-point loss to the 76ers was sandwiched in the middle.

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Sixers cautiously optimistic about Bynum's return

Andrew Bynum's return is getting closer and closer every day.

The injured Sixers center told reporters that he's been able to dunk on the basketball court. He is still predicting a return either right before or right after the NBA All-Star break (Feb. 15-17).

Head coach Doug Collins said that Bynum is pain free and continues to move in the right direction. The team is remaining cautious with his return to the court, with Collins noting that he needs to drop a little weight.

"We won't just throw him out there and just give him a crash course," Collins said. "That might cause a setback."

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Get to know a Phillies prospect: Kyle Simon

It's been a succession of low-profile moves by Ruben Amaro Jr. after the Phillies signed Jonathan Papelbon to a lucrative deal after the 2011 season crumbled.

One of those transactions was the Phillies parting with Jim Thome last summer. The aging power hitter with the balky back couldn't play first base. The Phillies dealt the future Hall-of-Famer to Baltimore for a pair of prospects, catcher Gabriel Lino, 19, and right-handed pitcher Kyle Simon, 22.

Each of the farmhands has an upside and the latter was one of seven minor leaguers invited to Citizens Bank Park for a prospect seminar. Simon was on the fringe with the O's. He was 2-8 with a 3.96 ERA as a starter in the Carolina league.

The Phillies moved Simon to the bullpen and the results were dramatic. He went 3-0 with a 1.26 ERA in seven appearances with Clearwater and 1-0 with a 1.42 ERA in 13 appearances with Reading.

"I like the pen better," he said. "It's more relaxed. With relieving, you get in and get everything you want on the table. I like to pitch under pressure."

Out of the seven farmhands in for the prospect seminar, Simon may be the first to reach the majors.

"The Phillies see me getting to the big leagues the quickest out of the bullpen," Simon said. "I ended up dominating in Reading and Clearwater."

Ed Condran
sports@metro.us

Welcome back

The Phils announced signing veteran reliever Chad Durbin yesterday to a one-year contract worth $1.1 million. Durbin can make $350,000 in incentives.

- Durbin, 35, went 4-1 with a 3.10 ERA last year in Atlanta, his best campaign since leaving the Phillies in 2010.
- He went 11-7 with a 3.62 ERA in three seasons (2008-10) in South Philadelphia.
- "I still throw the same pitches I did. It's just a matter of execution," Durbin said.

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PRETTY IN PRINTS

Sure, everyone was obsessed with Benedict Cumberbatch's cool Belstaff coat in 'Sherlock' But the show ignited another design craving for us: Wallpaper

It seems like every year or so there's a design story proclaiming the return of wallpaper. The truth is, we don't think wallpaper was ever not in style. Thanks to a recent marathon of PBS's amazing Masterpiece series "Sherlock," we were reminded of just how cool and cozy a space can look covered in, say, pretty damask prints. In this modern reimagining, Sherlock Holmes' London flat looks like the kind of place we want to host brunch parties and salon-style discussions with our besties — despite the bullet holes in his walls. The vibe is thanks to his wallpaper, Zoffany's Navarre Flock. (Oh yeah — we tracked it down.) Get inspired with these timeless papers.

Tina Chadha
tina.chadha@metro.us

The papers

1. Graham & Brown Spellbound Mermaids, $125 per roll, www.grahambrown.com

2. Farrow & Ball Tessella BP 3604, $255 per roll, www.farrow-ball.com

3. Miss Print Garden City Bustle, $95 per roll, www.missprint.co.uk

Zoffany Navarre Flock, price upon request, www.zoffany.com

5. Grow House Grow Cottontail in tapioca, $180 per roll, www.growhousegrow.com

6. Urban Outfitters Peony, $79 per roll, www.urbanoutfitters.com

7. Ferm Living Wilderness in gold, $110 per roll, www.fermlivingshop.com

at home with metro

Home prices see best yearly gain since '06

▶ Home prices are higher, but consumer confidence is lower.

CREATAS

Home prices rose in November to rack up their best yearly gain since the housing crisis began, a further sign that the sector is on the mend.

But data on consumer confidence yesterday was less encouraging, with moods falling to their lowest level in more than a year as Americans became more pessimistic about the economic outlook and their financial prospects in the wake of higher taxes for many.

The S&P/Case Shiller composite index of 20 metropolitan areas gained 0.6 percent in November on a seasonally adjusted basis, in line with economists' forecasts.

Prices in the 20 cities rose 5.5 percent year over year, making for the strongest yearly price increase since August 2006, when prices were on their way down.

By the numbers

5.5%

Prices in the 20 cities rose 5.5 percent year over year, making for the strongest yearly price increase since August 2006 when prices were on their way down.

The housing market became a bright spot for the economy last year as prices rose and inventory tightened. The sector is expected to contribute to economic growth in 2013.

"What we're seeing is a really a gradual improvement in the overall economy," said Anthony Chan, chief economist for Chase Private Client in New York.

Quoted

"What we're seeing is really a gradual improvement in the overall economy."

ANTHONY CHAN, CHIEF ECONOMIST FOR CHASE PRIVATE CLIENT IN NEW YORK

Rising home prices and recent gains in the stock market should blunt the impact of tax increases for consumers and spending should improve by the second half of the year, said Chan.

Homebuyers also have been enticed by historically low interest rates. The Federal Reserve's latest efforts are helping to keep rates low, as the central bank buys assets including mortgage-backed securities.

It was the 10th month in a row that prices have increased, the longest string of gains since before 2006. Last year's rise in prices beat a nine-month consecutive run in 2009 and 2010, when the market was boosted by a homebuyer tax credit.

A number of challenges remain for the housing market, including tight access to mortgages and foreclosures.

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Upcycling and more

Ready to make that glass bottle light fixture you saw on Pinterest? Head to the Philadelphia Home Show Make sure to sign up for a free session with a professional organizer

At the Philadelphia Home Show, starting Saturday at the Convention Center, visitors can peruse home goods from 300 exhibitors and receive expert tips and guidance. "It's everything that has to do with the home, from decor to furniture to completely remodeling," says Alyson Caplan, show director. She gives us the scoop on what not to miss.

▶ Showgoers can get lot of renovating tips at the Philadelphia Home Show.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE PHILADELPHIA HOME SHOW

Embrace the DIY trend

"One thing we've expanded on this year is the whole idea of 'upcycling' — repurposing old things and making them new," she says. Show attendees can tour two designer rooms made entirely of salvaged and repurposed items. It's a way to freshen up your home on a budget, Caplan says, and it doesn't require you to be an arts and crafts authority. "People see things on Pinterest and are realizing 'I can do that myself, with what I already have.'"

Decorate responsibly

The Home Show teamed up with ReStore, Habitat for Humanity's second-hand shop, for the Ultimate Upcycle Challenge. Participants were each given $100 and tasked with transforming a ReStore item into something entirely new. Their creations will be on display at the show, where you can vote for your favorite. An online auction of the items will benefit Habitat.

Clear the clutter

Several members of the National Association of Professional Organizers will offer free one-on-one consultations to help you finally clean up the mess you've made. "The Ask the Expert area is a new feature this year," Caplan says. "You'll get the kind of consultation that these professionals typically charge for."

Rachel Vigoda
letters@metro.us

If you go

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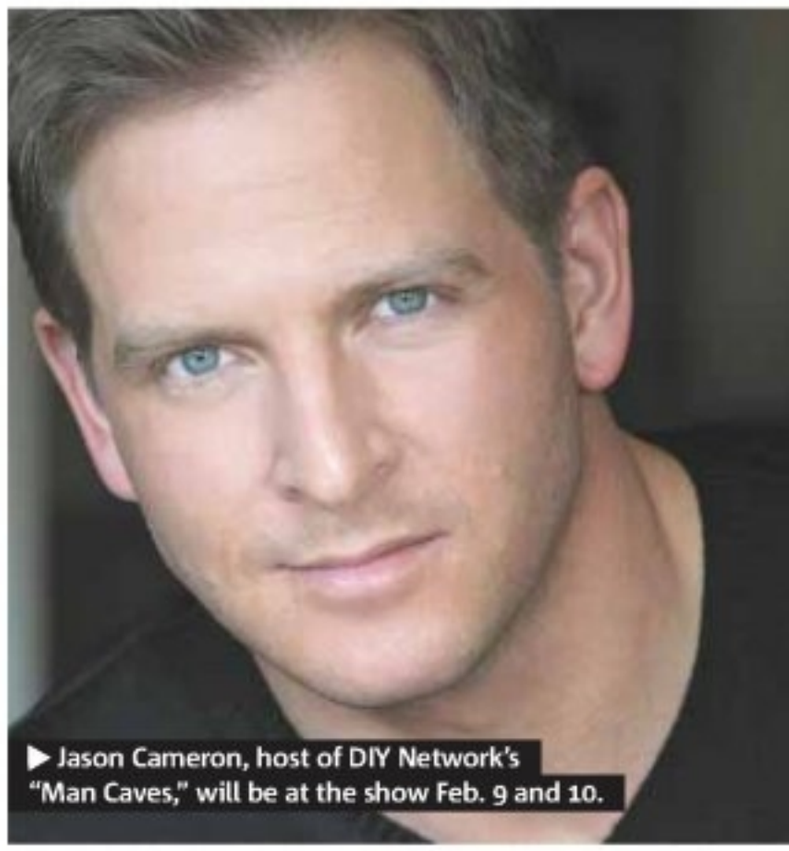

▶ Jason Cameron, host of DIY Network's "Man Caves," will be at the show Feb. 9 and 10.

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